destruction of Bamiyan Buddhas and other mainifestations of Afghanistan's prc-Islamic art. The Resolution called upon the Taliban to abide by their previous commitments to protect Afghanistan's cultural heritage from all acts of vandalism damage and theft.

There was widespread international condemnation of the Taliban militia's actions. The UN Secretary General, Director General of UNESCO, European Union and several Muslim countries were severely critical of the Taliban Militia. During Prime Minister's recent visit to Iran, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran while condemning the Taliban actions said that they had brought a bad name to Islam.

(c) and (d) The Government is aware of harsh discriminatory policies of the Taliban against the minorities and their places of worship in Afghanistan. Government has brought this to the attention of its foreign interlocutors.

Outcome of Prime Minister's Iran visit

4461. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

PROF. M. SANKARLINGAM:

SHRI ABANI ROY:

SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has recently visited Iran for holding talks as "Strategic partners" to deal with the conflict with Afghanistan, establishing better relations with Iran and work for stability in the Central Asia;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions and outcome thereof including Pakistan's interference in our internal affairs and encouraging terrorist activities alongwith the number and details of agreements signed pertaining to trade, customs, energy cooperation, bilateral investment protection, information technology, the options to transport gas to India etc. including strategy between the two countries on Taliban; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) Prime Minister paid an official visit to Iran, a country with which India shares deep historical ties and civilisational and cultural affinities, from 10—13 April, 2001. During PM's visit both sides discussed issues relating to cooperation on bilateral, regional and international matters. On Afghanistan, while agreeing that a military solution to the civil conflict in Afghanistan was not possible, PM and President Khatami expressed deep concern over the growth of extremism and threat of terrorism and illegal trade in narcotics emanating from the area of extremists. Both sides agreed to enhance mutual cooperation for safeguarding peace and stability in the region which was witnessing the rise of extremists forces, terrorism and increased flow of illicit drugs.

Both sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and recognised the threat to national states and international peace and stability from international terrorism and extremism. PM and President Khatami also condemned states that aid, abet and directly support international terrorism.

PM and President Khatami of Iran signed the 'Tehran Declaration', which embodies their vision of cooperation based on shared concerns, common aspirations and shared complementarities for the benefit of the two peoples and of the region and world at large. In addition, agreements on (i) Trade and Economic Cooperation and (ii) Customs Cooperation and MOUs on, (iii) Information Technology, (iv) Cooperation in the field of Energy, (v) Cooperation in the field of Power (conventional and non-conventional sources) and (vi) Technical Cooperation were signed.

Global efforts to combat poverty

4462. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a bid to step up global efforts to combat poverty, the Prime Minister has suggested creation of a global poverty alleviation fund through international levy on capital flow among the developed countries and all repatriations from developing countries;